

Colchester Community and Economic Development Advisory Council (CEDAC) Minutes August 20, 2009

Members Attending: David Usher, Chair, Nanci Glindmyer, Vice-Chair, Mike Mazza, Joe Egan, Bill Peters, Paul Olsen. Absent: Deborah Winters, J. Churchill Hindes,. Others: Kimberly Murray.

The minutes from July 16th were approved. Mike made the motion, seconded by Nancy.

Economic Development Plan

The Council reviewed the draft outline and discussed the overview for the document. The current economic situation was discussed including the type and rate of residential construction, new jobs and new businesses. Someone mentioned that Green Mountain Coffee Roasters Administration was looking for a new location. Kimberly will follow up. The plan needs to include evaluating or tracking economic indicators over the next five years to see how Colchester is doing. There are a variety of ways to do that. Keeping track of the commercial tax base is just one way of many. We discussed the quality of life issue that comes up often but is hard to measure and what degree do we include it in our plan. The group felt we should not mention it specifically but rather we should focus on the quality of our assets and how to leverage those assets including the lake, access to I-89, proximity to Burlington and Montreal, vacant land, recreational opportunities, a diversified economy, and we will also add our educational and biotechnology research institutions.

Bill asked what the plan will be used for. There are a variety of uses including policy direction for the Select Board, attached to the Town Plan for use during Act 250 hearings, and close deals with new businesses by showing our pro-activeness. We want to emphasize improving on what we already have in Colchester. We discussed Bill's business and need for more data processors. Bill's need is not location dependent, he can locate where the rent is cheaper like in Derby or Newport because he doesn't require the assets we have. The group discussed Fort Ethan Allen as an ideal place for his business expansion. Bill had not thought of the Fort.

What we know about Colchester is we need to attract and retain value added businesses that need those assets. That's where our focus should be. We need more public access to the Lake and need more focus on the quality of the lake as an important economic driver. The Council mentioned more than once that Kimberly's office is an asset too, that many communities don't have someone dedicated to this task and that can be important in getting a company to locate here, it was definitely helpful in landing Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

The group wants to narrow down the business types we will focus on for Colchester. We discussed hospitality, services, retail, recreation based business, education, technology (including computer, bio and nanotechnology) based business. We want to keep the manufacturing and industrial companies we have but not necessarily actively recruit new ones. Agriculture will be encouraged to be sustained. The group again mentioned Kimberly's position as an asset with an ability to be proactive and travel. Kimberly noted the Select Board banned all out of state travel indefinitely. The Council felt that will really tie our hands with trying to get ahead and recruit. Paul noted that the Select Board needs to be able to tell the story.

The group asked Kimberly to draft up these thoughts into some rudimentary goals to flesh out for the next meeting.

CEDAC Appointment Update

James Ehlers is still the only candidate applied so far. The Select Board is scheduled to review applications on September 8, 2009. The Council would be pleased to have James join the group, he adds a dimension the group feels is needed.

Committee of Committees Update from Dave

Dave sits on the Committee of Committees for CEDAC. They discussed the Integrated Water Resource Management Plan project that the Public Works Dept. is undertaking via a consultant. The Town received a 2 million dollar grant from EPA to do a wastewater capacity and alternatives analysis for Malletts Bay. They are inventorying all lakefront property back to 300 feet and inspecting waste systems. They are doing a pollution assessment and DNA analysis to discover the source of the pollution. They will also gather up existing data from wells and other septic systems. The last portion of the project will be a comprehensive management plan on how to deal with what they find out. There will also be a public education and outreach component. They will have a website at colchesterwaters.org. Stormwater runoff also needs to be addressed. Dave mentioned that the ecoli standard for VT is three times more stringent than the federal standard. Costs and remediation will also need to be addressed.

Dave said they have some goals for the Town they are working on including transportation and the bypass around Malletts Bay, the lake, and the fiscal health of the Town and how to get on a sustainable course.

The next CEDAC meeting will be September 17, 2009 at 8:00 a.m. at the Town Hall. We may discuss the local option tax memo Kimberly prepared for the Select Board, the Exit 16 Transportation Study and continue work on the ED Plan.

Respectfully submitted by,
Kimberly L. Murray, AICP